REMARKS

I.   Priority

In the Office Action, it was asserted that the application lacks the necessary reference to

the prior application. Applicants respectfully disagree. In a Preliminary Amendment filed with

the application on April 25, 2001, Applicants amended the specification to add on page 1, before

the first sentence, the following sentence: "This application is a continuation of application

number 08/723,853, filed September 30, 1996 (pending), which is hereby incorporated by

reference." Applicants note that the priority information is also listed on the official filing

receipt.

In this amendment, Applicants have amended the priority sentence to state the current

status of the parent application.

II.   Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

All of the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the

proposed combination of U.S. Patent No. 6,130,935 to Shaffer et al. and U.S. Patent No.

5,590,184 to London. Each of the independent claims (Claims 27, 44, and 45) recites elements

relating to modifying a calling party identification number of a calling party to a calling party

identification number of a group associated with the calling party. In the Office Action, it was

admitted that Shaffer et al. fails to teach this element, and London was relied upon in an attempt

to cure this deficiency. However, contrary to the assertion in the Office Action, London also

does not teach this element.

The Office Action cites col., 1, line 61 – col. 2, lines 25 in London as teaching modifying

a calling party identification number from the calling party's actual telephone number. However,

such a teaching is insufficient to cure the admitted deficiency in Shaffer et al. because this

passage does not teach modifying the calling party identification number of a calling party to a calling party identification number *of a group associated with the calling party*, as recited in the claims.

London is directed to a system that protects the privacy of a calling party. In operation, when a calling party goes off-hook, the system automatically modifies the calling party identification number to a *randomly-selected* telephone number that is *not assigned to any party*. London refers to this number as a "non-assigned number." When a called party receives a call from the calling party, the called party's Caller ID box displays the randomly-selected number instead of the calling party's actual telephone number. Because the non-assigned number is not assigned to any party, the number is not in any way associated with the calling party. Accordingly, the called party cannot discern the identity of the calling party, thereby securing the calling party's privacy.

Unlike the system in London which uses a number that is not associated with the calling party, the claims require that the calling party identification number be modified to an identification number of a group *associated with the calling party*. The non-assigned number in London is not an "identification number of a group associated with the calling party," as recited in the claims, because the non-assigned number is randomly generated and is not assigned to any party, much less a group associated with the calling party. Indeed, the very purpose of London is to use a number that is not associated in any way with the calling party in order to secure the calling party's privacy. If the calling party identification number were modified to an identification number of a group associated with the calling party (*e.g.*, the calling party's work number), as required by the claims, the called party would be given information that can be used to determine the identity of the calling party.

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Because London fails to teach the element that was admitted to be missing in Shaffer et al., Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed combination does not teach each and every element recited in the claims. Additionally, Applicants note that the Office Action does not even address another element recited in the claims and not taught by the proposed combination: in response to a privacy indicator, restricting a passing of the calling party identification number of the group associated with the calling party. Because the proposed combination is missing these elements, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections against the claims should be removed, and this application should be passed to allowance.

III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration is respectfully requested. If there are any questions concerning this Amendment, the Examiner should contact the undersigned attorney at (312) 321-4719.

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Respectfully submitted,
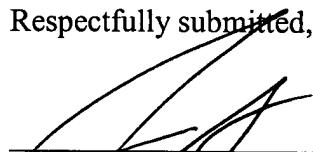
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